Underwater

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by jonnimir

Summary

Kinktober Day 24: Shower/Bath.

Hannibal offers to help Will after he throws up an ear, instead of calling the FBI. Then he gets distracted and things go downhill.

Notes

Because when given a completely innocent prompt like "shower/bath" I apparently can't help myself from taking the darkest route possible. Add "sexualized drowning" to the list of things I never expected to write.

- Translation into Русский available: Под водой by SnakeCorps

“Show me.”

Will had trouble unraveling from the frozen ball he’d made of himself while waiting for Hannibal to arrive. It was far too cold outside to be in nothing more than a flimsy t-shirt and pajama pants, but that was only a distant concern. Hannibal held out a hand and Will looked up at it uncertainly, feeling like he didn’t deserve the kindness. He would have called the police himself if he had any way to know for certain if this was real or not. It *felt* real, but it could just be his mind playing tricks on him. Again.

He took the hand and struggled to his feet.

He was still shivering inside. Hannibal guided him to a chair and took a blanket from the foot of his bed, draping it over his shoulders. Will grabbed at it gratefully and pulled it tight around him. He couldn’t bring himself to watch when Hannibal walked to the kitchen to look in the sink, and turned his gaze to the distance, then the floor. He started to babble.

“I don’t remember going to bed last night. But I must have. Maybe I got up to let the dogs out, and I...”

“When did you last see Abigail?”

“I woke up and my feet were muddy…”

“*Will*.”

He paused, tried to raise his eyes to look at Hannibal. He felt like a reprimanded child.

“When did you last see Abigail?” Hannibal asked, firm.

He swallowed, and tried to search through the haze of his memory. “Yesterday, at her father’s cabin. I had an episode. She said something was wrong with me… she was afraid of me. She ran away.”

“What happened? Why was she afraid?”

“I… I hallucinated. I hallucinated that I killed her. But it wasn’t real, I know it wasn’t real.”

Hannibal sighed and crouched at his side. Will looked at him, anxiety tightening his chest. Hannibal passed a hand over his face, and that itself was alarming—Will had never seen him visibly overcome by emotions.

When he dropped his hand, Will impulsively grabbed it in his own and squeezed in an attempt to ground himself. It made the pounding blood in his head slow a bit, reassured by his warmth. Hannibal looked, for once, uncertain, and he stared at Will for a long while without saying anything.

“You’re supposed to be my paddle,” Will said, voice breaking. “My measure of reality. Tell me the truth. Tell me what you see.”

Hannibal looked down where their hands met and pursed his lips. Then he exhaled. “There’s no denying what’s in your kitchen sink, and I think you know that, whether or not you’re willing to believe it. This doesn’t look good for you, Will. They could arrest you already based on the evidence available.”

“Are you going to call them?”

Hannibal took a moment to respond. His hand twitched in Will’s. “By any ethical standard, I should.”

“Then do it.”

Hannibal hesitated, searching his face at length before finally giving Will’s hand a decisive squeeze. “You’re my friend, Will. I’m worried for Abigail, but I know you would never have hurt her if you were in your right mind. We’ll get to the bottom of what happened. I’ll help you, if you ask.”

“You have no way of knowing what kind of evidence I could have left behind. I could have…. god, what if I left her… what if…” Terrible images filled his head and he shook it as if that could dismiss them.

“We’ll cross that bridge when we get to it.”

“You didn’t approve of me taking her there in the first place. I should have listened. I…”

He was afraid he was going to hyperventilate, his lungs feeling too short of air. Hannibal squeezed his hand hard. “I’m with you now, Will. We’ll need to clean this up, and see what evidence we can find on your body that can help us understand what may have happened. You can’t afford to waste any time panicking. Do you want my help?”

Will swallowed. “I don’t want to drag you down with me.”

“You won’t. I won’t allow you to.”

He nodded, shortly. Closed his eyes as if that might bring him some clarity. “Then yes. Please.”

“Good. First thing, Will…” He pressed a hand to Will’s forehead, eyes looking taut with concern. “You feel feverish again. I’ll want you to try taking something for that again, see if you can keep it down.”

Will felt nauseated just at the thought, but he nodded.

“Good. After that—I’ve noticed some scrapes. I want to look at those and clean them. And I noticed the mud on your feet extends past your ankles, yet your pants have no dirt on them. Am I correct in assuming you were less clothed when you woke up, and there are more marks further up your legs?”

Will nodded.

“Then I’ll take a look at that and see if I can get a clearer picture of what happened. Someplace with better lighting—your bathroom, perhaps?”

He got Will a glass of water and some pills, then managed to coax him into his bathroom. He removed his own outerwear—coat, gloves, scarf, and even his suit jacket. It was more dressed down than Will usually saw him, but he looked no less intimidating in his black vest and burgundy shirt, and Will was very aware of how underdressed he was in comparison, already.

“If you would, Will.”

There was no point in modesty under the circumstances, but he still waited until Hannibal turned and began drawing a bath for him. He took off his shirt and pants, leaving only his boxers on, and looked at himself in the mirror. God, he looked like hell. Sweaty, scratched up, and covered in grime. He stared down at his hands until Hannibal approached and picked one up one in his own, peering at the undersides of his nails. There was clearly dirt, but there could be more.

“I have nail clippers in the medicine cabinet,” Will said, quiet and flat. “For scrapings. If that’s what we’re doing.”

Hannibal was silent, but retrieved them. He used the sharp file to scrape underneath the nail, until dirt and what looked depressingly like flaky, dried blood fell onto the sink.

Will couldn’t look at him. He knew how somber Hannibal’s face would be, couldn’t bring himself to see that, all the disappointment and concern.

“I don’t remember anything.” His voice cracked.

“I believe you,” Hannibal said. It sounded honest, at least.

He turned Will's arm over, examining the scratches along it. He checked Will's front and back, though nothing seemed to be there. Will carefully avoided his gaze, just staring at his own reflection, but he knew what Hannibal was going to say before he opened his mouth.

“No sign of any attack on your body, other than what could reasonably be expected as a counterattack.”

He dropped to a crouch then, checking the scratches on Will’s legs. He traced the line of one with his finger, and Will had to stop himself from flinching away.

“These, on the other hand, appear to be from underbrush. Walking in the woods with inadequate clothing.”

“My feet are covered in mud. Doesn’t take a genius to figure out I was wandering.”

Hannibal stood again, his eyes slightly narrowed. “I’m trying to help piece together the evidence, Will. In the absence of any memories, this is the best we have.”

Will quickly dropped his gaze, cringing at himself for being ungrateful. “Sorry.”

Hannibal laid a hand on his shoulder. It felt cool against his bare skin—he must still be feverish. “Considering the circumstances, I can hardly blame you for your temper. And rather than wasting time on that matter, you should bathe now.”

“Right, you said something about… cleaning my wounds.”

“Considering the state you’re in, only a full bath will do. Though I’d advise you use a washcloth for your feet before you muddy the whole bath.”

“Right.” He walked unsteadily to the bath, dipped a washcloth into the bathwater, and sat on the edge while he cleaned off the worst of the mud. When he was done and threw the filthy cloth on the floor, Hannibal still hadn’t moved. Will gestured toward the door with his head. “Pretty sure I can take care of this part myself.”

“I’d rather not leave you alone at the moment, Will. In the wake of such trauma…”

“I’m not *traumatized*,” he snapped, before he could help himself.

“You’re acting out. You could be self-destructive.”

“I’m fine.”

“I’m staying with you, Will. Into the bath, now.”

He didn’t have the energy to argue. With a ruffled sigh, he dropped his underwear and stepped into the water. He turned off the tap that was still running and sat back, aware that Hannibal was still watching him. He took a deep breath and tried to stop the frazzled anxiety from whipping itself up into irritation at the unexpected invasiveness. He splashed water onto his arms and began to soap up, reminding himself that Hannibal was only trying to help.

But after a minute he couldn’t help sniping. “You don’t have to watch me every minute, you know. I feel like a toddler having a supervised bath.” He shot a look toward Hannibal, eyes accidentally meeting his for a fleeting moment, and he froze up. *Oh*.

Hannibal no longer seemed to have a handle on his usually well-constrained face. His eyes were too fully trained on Will’s body, too hungry. Since he was determined to avoid eye contact earlier, Will had missed whatever was precursor to this, but it was now impossible to deny there was something disconcertingly like arousal on his face.

He swallowed, frozen like a deer in headlights. Hannibal began walking toward him and Will couldn’t move, couldn’t argue, couldn’t throw a sharp remark at him. He felt uncomfortably vulnerable, never more aware than now of how tall and broad Hannibal was. Even when Hannibal crouched to eye level, it wasn’t any less intimidating—more so, in fact. Will’s face heated and he stared fixedly into the middle distance.

“It’s a good thing I was watching,” Hannibal said, still sounding calm and matter-of-fact, as if there wasn’t anything at all strange about this situation. “You’re not paying nearly enough attention to your injuries.”

He rolled his sleeves up past his elbows and lathered some soap with his bare hands. He rubbed over the scrapes on Will's shoulder, fastidious but unnervingly sensual.

"Hannibal…" Will grimaced as the soap got into the wounds re-opened by the water. "This isn't…"

Hannibal let him trail off, seemingly unbothered by his broken protests. He pressed deep into aching muscle on his back and Will groaned. It felt good. The physical pressure. All this attention. His strong hands. But he was too upset to be aroused. By the feel of his ministrations, Hannibal was not.

He let it continue for a moment, too weak and exhausted to put up a fight against a massage that his tense shoulders desperately needed. But when he felt a hand dip lower, curling around his waist in a considerably non-clinical way, he felt a shiver of disgust, and couldn't bite his tongue.

"How can you be like this when I just vomited up an ear? When it's probably Abigail's and she's… probably dead, probably… *half-eaten* in some cabin in the woods, *christ*, Hannibal."

Hannibal paused momentarily, but not long enough to reassure Will. He ran a soapy hand up along his spine to the nape of his neck, and stroked down to his shoulder blade. He didn't sound entirely focused when he said, "There is no body as of yet. Perhaps there never will be."

"So the other option is, what, I cut off her ear and she ran off alive?"

"It's possible."

Will laughed, but it was harsh. "How can you be so calm?" When Hannibal didn't answer, his irritation flared. He leaned forward, away from Hannibal's hands, and started to brace himself to stand. "Fuck you. I'm calling Jack so the team can come over and start the investigation. At least then I'll get some answers."

Hannibal's hand latched onto his arm so hard it hurt. "I'm afraid it's too late for that. You've already asked for my help and destroyed evidence, and you would compromise us both if you do."

Will snarled. "Let go. And don't think for a second I care about 'compromising' you when you were only helping so you could take advantage of me. I'll tell them you were the one who told me to cover it up."

He wrenched his arm free and crouched to stand, but Hannibal caught him again. He barely had time to register the hand around his throat, let alone brace himself, before he was shoved back into the water with a splash, sliding under the surface. Water pressed aggressively at his nostrils and panic screamed through him, but it only took a moment for his legs to kick out against the end of the tub so he could push himself up again.

Hannibal released him as he surged back above water, gasping and blinking water from his stinging eyes. Once his vision was back to normal he saw Hannibal again, looking irritated

but with no trace of concern. And he understood.

"*You* did this."

Hannibal stared at him, blinking but still seeming unfazed. "I don't appreciate your attitude."

His mind was racing. He braced his arms against the sides of the tub as well as he could, wary. "You framed me. You wanted me to ask you to help so I'd be completely in your debt."

After a momentary silence and a slight tilt of his head, watching Will's movements very carefully, Hannibal said, "This could have gone in many directions. This was only one of several possibilities."

"Did you hurt Abigail?" Now it was anger that rose up in him. "I swear to god, Hannibal, if you did…"

"She has suffered the loss of her ear, but nothing more. It was a humane surgery and she is being well cared for. It would have been far worse for her to have faced jail time instead, for crimes she was involved in by no fault of her own."

"I can't believe I trusted you." He couldn't tell whether it was anger or hurt now that sent a pang through his chest. "You were my friend."

"I *am* your friend, Will. I always have been."

"Really?" He watched Hannibal warily, for either another attack or an opening to escape. "Friends don't frame each other for murder. Friends don't try to *drown* each other."

"If I had been *trying* to drown you, Will, you would be dead now."

"Do you want to put that to the test?" he growled. He was aware that this was a very poor time to challenge Hannibal, yet he felt his hackles rising, wanting to snap at the slightest provocation.

"Are you trying to drown yourself by my own hand? I warned you about self-destructive tendencies in the light of trauma."

"I'm not self-destructive. You're the one who's trying to destroy me."

"I don't wish to destroy you. You have flaws in your beliefs about yourself, and I want to help you solve them. Sometimes an indirect approach is more effective than trying to get you to admit those flaws directly."

"Well, now you've failed at the *indirect* approach, because I see what you're doing. Do you want to try a direct approach now, so I at least know what the fuck you're trying to do to me?"

Seeing the brief flicker of Hannibal's eyes over his body, he added, "And don't try to act like this is about sex, because I know it's more than that. You didn't cut off Abigail's ear just so you could comfort me and fuck me."

“True. It’s not the primary goal, though I would see that result as a fortunate bonus.”

“Well, you can take your *bonus* and shove it up your ass.” Knowing there would never be a better opening, he rose quickly and tried to lunge past Hannibal. But with his mind still somewhat foggy from fever, Will was already at a disadvantage. When he stepped over the side of the tub and was momentarily balanced on only one foot, Hannibal was quick to react. He was deft and easily strong enough to wrestle Will down, until his knees hit the bath mat and he was bent over the side of the tub, head pushed down until it was submerged. He was careful not to inhale, but the water still stung his nostrils on the way in.

He grasped at the edge of the tub and tried to push himself back up, but Hannibal’s grip on his nape was unrelenting, and he was weak and disoriented. He thrashed when that failed, but he got no purchase on Hannibal, just the heaviness of him pressing on his spine and the back of his neck. It wasn’t until he stopped struggling, trying to save air, that Hannibal grabbed his wrists, holding them against the small of his back, and yanked him back above water.

He gasped for air as water ran down his face and dripped from his hair. His stomach pressed into the side of the tub, and the position was uncomfortable as well as embarrassingly revealing. He could feel Hannibal’s trousers against the back of his thighs, and his feet forced their way between Will’s knees, sliding them further apart.

He groaned and squeezed his eyes shut, expecting things would only go downhill from here. “Go ahead and rape me then, if that’s who you want to be.”

“A rapist? Likely not. But you underestimate me if you think I can’t gain as much pleasure by hurting you as I could by penetrating you.”

Hannibal shoved his head underwater again and he struggled, trying and failing to wrench his hands free and finding no other way to fight. Hannibal adjusted his position, lowered himself until he was crushing Will’s stomach into the high side of the tub, weighing him down as he bucked. His hips pressed into Will, and Will felt the dig of an erection into the cleft of his ass, though Hannibal was still clothed. That just made him scrabble harder to rise up, a flurry of motion that elicited a low sound from Hannibal as he rode it out atop him. *Sadist*.

Hannibal pulled him back by his hair until he was just above water level, and his throat was stretched at an awkward angle. He could barely get any breath in even now, and he was shaking from fear and adrenaline.

He knew it wouldn’t do him any good, but faced with the prospect of being submerged again, he gasped, “Stop, just…”

Hannibal ignored him and plunged his head back into the water, and this time he didn't try to break free—it clearly wasn’t making any difference. But he felt Hannibal heavy at his back, the dominant gesture of his hand on his head. He was under longer this time. When his body registered the absence of air, he couldn’t resist jerking, reflexively trying to rise up even though he knew it was futile. A rumble passed through Hannibal’s chest, and he even rutted, slightly, dragging cloth against his bare skin, and Will knew how much he was getting off on this.

He tried hard not to struggle, not to give that part of Hannibal the satisfaction, but it was inevitable. His chest felt too tight, aching from denial, and he couldn't restrain the burst of panic when they tried to expand and failed, sucking on scant dead air held in his cheeks. Another jerk of motion, a grunt from his chest—and he couldn't hear what Hannibal was saying but it sounded far too calm for what it surely was, those echoing, distant words. He clenched his jaw, his throat, his hands, his entire body, twisted with frustration. He wanted to inhale but couldn't, knew all too well the raw burning of water entering airways, remembered when he was a kid and had tumbled off a dock before he knew how to swim. And his body thrashed, back and forth, only aware of the absence of air and the heaviness on his back, turning ever less human, ever more animal and base as it fought to survive. And Hannibal kept holding him down steadily, heavy.

Before he gave in and inhaled water, Hannibal raised him up again. One breath, a half breath, then back under, while he was still inhaling. And there was the burning, and he remembered sinking, drinking in brackish water that was much colder than this bath. His airways tightened, closing in an attempt to stop him from breathing in more water, but it would be useless if he couldn't get air.

He bucked and Hannibal held tight to him, riding out his frenzy, letting out an odd growl. Will shook his head back and forth, trying to dislodge the hand in his hair, for naught. His feet could get no traction. Arms weakened. Back aching. Head at Hannibal's mercy. Lungs screaming, heart seizing.

Above, and he had a fit of coughing and ragged gasps that lasted just long enough for him to have a glimmer of hope that maybe, just maybe, this would be deemed torture enough. Then it was torn from him again when he was submerged right after he emptied his lungs with a cough, and he couldn't stop his lungs from desperately trying to pull in air to fill them. His throat was on fire. His spine aching, and his shoulders pained from trying to wrench his arms free. His knees throbbed—had he hit them against the tile? He was pretty sure he was crying underwater. Hannibal pressed down hard everywhere he held Will, adding new aches to everything that hurt.

There was no space for anything in his head besides panic, and burning, and desperation. He was actively drowning, his airways flooded.

When he rose from the water this time he was dragged away from the tub and dumped onto his side. His lungs contracted and water gushed from his mouth—more than he thought he'd inhaled. He finally sucked in cool air, and coughed and gasped for several moments.

He lay dazed and shaking from adrenaline as Hannibal's touch turned again gentle, smoothing over his back. He rolled onto his stomach, away from the touch, and pushed himself up until he was kneeling, but braced on his hands. Slumped and weakened.

Hannibal brushed his wet hair out of his face and cupped his cheek. He flinched, but didn't have enough energy remaining to fight it when he was persistent. He submitted to the caress, even as his jaw clenched.

Hannibal's voice was rich with satisfaction when he spoke.

“If I decide one day to kill you, that will be my right. But for now, Will, I intend to have you in other ways.”

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